AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the title of the invention at the top of page 1 with the following amended title of the invention:

~~FORCE BITS FOR MAC CONFIGURATION~~

SYSTEM AND METHOD ENABLING CONFIGURATION OF PHYSICAL LAYER DEVICES AND CORRESPONDING LINK PARTNERS FOR COMMUNICATING NETWORK DATA VIA A CONFIGURATION SOURCE OR AUTO-NEGOTIATION

Please replace the 2 paragraphs beginning at page 5, line 4, which starts with "The data bus interface..." with the following amended paragraphs.

The data bus interface 20a, 20b, 20c, and 20d, for each NID 18a, 18b, 18c, and 18d, respectively, receives the network interface configuration information ~~28~~ 22. Each of the data bus interfaces 20a, 20b, 20c, and 20d, is connected to the MACs 32a, 32b, 32c, and 32d, respectively. Each of the MACs 32a, 32b, 32c, and 32d contains at least one register 36a, 36b, 36c, and 36d, respectively, which is configured to store the MAC configuration data 28. Each media access controller 32a, 32b, 32c, and 32d is configured to transmit and receive the network data according to the MAC configuration data 28.

Each of the NIDs 18a, 18b, 18c, and 18d includes management data input/output (MDIO) logic 40a, 40b, 40c, and 40d, respectively. The prescribed configuration information ~~28~~ 30 for configuring the PHY 14a, 14b, 14c, and 14d, is received by all of the NIDs 18a, 18b, 18c, and 18d, respectively. The MDIO logic 40a of the selected or master NID 18a writes the configuration information to the PHY's 14 a-d. Hence, the selected or master NID 18a forwards

the prescribed configuration information 30 to common MDIO logic 42 via a management data clock/MDIO (MDC/MDIO) signal path 44. The common MDIO logic 42 receives the prescribed configuration information 30 and sends the prescribed configuration information 30 to at least one PHY 14a, 14b, 14c, and 14d.